Memorial addresses in honor of Governors Austin and McGill.

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES IN HONOR OF GOVERNORS AUSTIN AND McGILL.*

* Presented at the monthly meeting of the Executive Council, November 13, 1905.

Horace Austin was born in Canterbury, Conn., October 15, 1831; and died in Minneapolis, November 7, 1905. He came to Minnesota in 1856, settling at St. Peter; was judge of the Sixth Judicial District, 1865–69; and was governor of this state, 1870–74.

Andrew Ryan McGill was born in Saegerstown, Pa., February 19, 1840; and died in St. Paul, October 31, 1905. He came to Minnesota and settled at St. Peter, in 1861; was private secretary to Governor Austin, 1870–73; and was governor, 1887–89.

Biographies of these and each of the other governors of Minnesota, by General James H. Baker, are published, with their portraits, in Volume XIII of this Society's Historical Collections, issued at the same time with the present volume.

The first of these Memorial Addresses was mainly written before the death of Governor Austin, which occurred a week after that of Governor McGill and less than a week before this Memorial Meeting.

General Henry W. Childs spoke as follows:

The death of so distinguished a member of this Society as the late Andrew Ryan McGill calls for more than a formal obituary notice. It presents an occasion where a due regard for the memory of one who has taken a prominent part in public affairs prompts a review, however brief, of his life and public services.

Governor McGill represented the best ideals of civic life. He fulfilled, in a marked degree, the obligations of a citizen. In all his relations with his fellow men, whether in public or private station, he was always the courteous gentleman, useful citizen, 714 thoughtful and helpful friend. Calm in temperament, sound in judgment, of quick intelligence, well informed, courageous in defense of the right, moved always by a spirit of the utmost candor, he lived among men a wholesome force.

Although not great in the sense of being endowed with those extraordinary natural gifts possessed only by the few, he yet rose far above mediocrity and was in truth an able man. That bodily infirmity which terminated his career with appalling suddenness, began its destructive work in the very bloom of his manhood. For more than twenty years he had performed his part upon life's stage admonished by a silent monitor that he must wisely conserve his energies. He was, therefore, seriously handicapped in any field which exacts prolonged and wearying labor, either of brain or muscle. He was thus compelled to halt on the hither side of that intense application without which none may gather the richest rewards of intellectual effort. And yet he surpassed in the race many a stalwart competitor. They who enjoyed his intimacy and listened to his discourse upon men and measures, know best of all with what clearness and fullness he had formed his opinions. Nor is there dearth of competent witnesses. A long public career had brought him in contact with men of note; aroused his interest in public questions, stimulated him to study and reflection, and furnished frequent occasion for an interchange of views. Fond of his friends, delighting in social converse, and sought out because of the quiet enjoyment of his companionship, he created a crowd of witnesses who can testify to the playfulness of his mirth and the breadth and solidity of his knowledge.

A brief glimpse at the chief events in his life is requisite to a fair estimate of his character.

It is no doubt a laudable desire and much witnessed of late at American firesides, to trace one's ancestry, if haply it may be done, to some great character who left a deep impress upon the times in which he moved. It betrays a deep seated belief that the qualities of

greatness are inheritable. Edwin Reed, in a passage of striking originality, has voiced this truth. “Intellectual energy,” he says, “is the product of antecedents. A great genius never comes by chance. It always bursts upon the world, as the new star in 715 Auriga burst upon us, unexpectedly, but only because we have not explored the depths out of which it has come. Every man at birth is an epitome of his progenitors. He starts out with the elements of his character drawn from the widest sources, but so mixed in him that he differs necessarily from every other individual of his raoe. Here is the problem of life. Not the dome of St. Peter's, but how the hand that rounded it acquired its skill; not the play of Hamlet, but how the mind that gave it its wondrous birth was developed,—these are our chief concerns.”

It may not be without profit to trace out to some extent, slight though it must be, the antecedents of our subject, and to ascertain a glimpse of the progenitors of which he was the epitome. What were the strains of blood that coursed in his veins?

That bigoted and oppressive English policy which denied Ireland religious liberty under Charles I. and ruined her industries under William of Orange, was nowhere more severely felt than in the province of Ulster. Antrim, an Ulster county and the most northeasterly territory of Ireland, was more Scotch than Irish, and more Protestant than Catholic. It had become under James I. a Presbyterian stronghold and a bee-hive of industrial activity. Oppression might exterminate, but it could not subdue the stern followers of John Knox. William Penn had, by friendly intervention, greatly endeared himself to Irish hearts, to many of whom Pennsylvania became an attractive name. There, during the eighteenth century, large numbers sought relief from the oppression of English misrule. What the Old World lost and the New World gained is witnessed in the splendid manhood displayed on many a battlefield and in many a forum. Among those who forsook old Antrim for the new colony was Patrick McGill, who arrived in 1774 and located at first in Northumberland county. When the Revolution rallied the sons of liberty in military ranks, he was among them and did his share of fighting against the mother country. In 1800 he removed to the western part of Pennsylvania, where he settled upon a tract of land in what afterward

became Crawford county. The family residence seems to have been the first house erected on the site of the village of Saegerstown.

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Patrick McGill had a family of several children, one of whom, named Charles Dillon McGill, married Angeline Martin, a lady of English descent. Her grandfather, Charles Martin, was appointed by Washington an officer in the Second United States Infantry, which office was subsequently resigned by him, and he thereafter received a commission as major general of Pennsylvania troops.

Of the marriage of Charles Dillon McGill and Angeline Martin was born the subject of these remarks. The mother is said to have been a lady of great force of character and Christian virtues. We may safely assume that Governor McGill began life not only as the inheritor of good blood, but also under excellent home influences. It was his misfortune to lose his mother by death when he was only eight years of age, an irreparable misfortune. His boyhood was passed upon his father's farm. He received such education as the public schools and the Saegerstown Academy could give him. That he was a studious youth appears from the fact that at the age of nineteen he removed to the state of Kentucky, where he found employment as a teacher in a public school, a pursuit which engaged him there for upwards of two years; but Kentucky was not in 1861 a congenial abode for a northern youth indoctrinated with a love for free institutions.

In his quest for a new field, young McGill came to Minnesota and located in 1861 at St. Peter, where he soon found employment as principal of the public schools. In August of the following year, he enlisted in the Ninth Regiment of Minnesota Infantry, and was made orderly sergeant of his company. His military experience covered about one year and embraced the campaign of his regiment against the Sioux Indians. Failing health resulted in his discharge from the service for physical disabilities in 1863. Shortly after his discharge from the service, he was elected superintendent of schools of Nicollet county, a position which he filled for two consecutive terms.

The year 1865 is witness of the earnestness with which McGill sought to make headway in the world. He not only embarked that year in the field of journalism, but he was also elected clerk of the district court of his county and began a course of study for 717 admission to the bar. During the next four years, his time was divided between his threefold duties. He was admitted to the legal profession in 1869, but it is fair to assume that his acquaintance with the sages of the law was neither broad nor deep. Whatever his natural aptitudes for the bar, it does not appear that he ever had a client or wrote a brief. Circumstances soon directed him to the political rather than the professional field.

Immediately upon his arrival at St. Peter he formed the acquaintance of a gentleman who was destined to attain great prominence in public life, the late Horace Austin. Governor Austin was a noble type of manhood. Fearless to a fault, the soul of integrity, loving and doing justice, he never shrank from duty, never quailed before an enemy, and never deceived a friend. Little indebted to the schools, he yet became an able lawyer, a wise judge, and one of the most powerful of reasoners.

When young McGill began the study of law, Horace Austin was the district judge of the judicial district to which Nicollet county then belonged, and became the student's preceptor. It is incredible that such a master taught the elements of law without emphasizing the truth that the great purpose of human law is the advancement of justice. The student never forgot the lesson.

Forty years ago the people of this country, and especially of the western states, became aroused over the question of the regulation of the railways, whose managers, while imposing excessive rates, claimed complete immunity from state interference. The public generally, including the bar of the country, conceded the immunity. But there were a few dissentients, and Judge Austin was among them. He expressed his views with rugged plainness and caught the public ear. In the fall of 1869 he became his party's candidate for the office of governor, and, notwithstanding unmeasured campaign vilification, he was successful at the polls. To McGill, who had given him hearty support with voice and

pen, he tendered the position of private secretary to the governor, and it was accepted. Thus was the young man introduced to the field of state politics, placed in touch with its widespread forces, and brought face to face with many of the practical problems of state government which were then uppermost in the public thought. 718 The position gave him excellent training for the duties which in turn awaited him.

The administration of Governor Austin deservedly ranks among the ablest administrations of the governor's office. No governor of Minnesota ever took up the burden with a firmer grasp or a keener sense of its obligations. His first message to the legislature is remarkable for its wealth of proposed measures looking to the future development of the state. With rare sagacity he foresaw the importance of Duluth as a distributing point and its influence upon transportation, and he therefore advocated the improvement of its harbor. He condemned the pernicious evil of unbridled special legislation, that patron saint of private jobbery. He recognized those hurtful restrictions of the constitution which were a stumblingblock to the progress of the state, and recommended the calling of a constitutional convention. He dealt with the subject of the public lands with the wisdom of a statesman. His discussion of the question of the relationship of railways to the public was a prophecy of the present. These and many other subjects were themes fruitful of much discussion in the executive chambers while Andrew R. McGill was private secretary. The impressions then formed were reflected in his messages to the legislature sixteen years afterward.

The association of the two men in those years was not to the advantage of the younger one alone. Governor Austin's wisdom never declared itself more surely than when he brought from St. Peter for the important office of private secretary the genial and clear-brained McGill, who was a born politician, using the term in its best sense, while Austin was naturally the reverse. McGill could placate where Austin, with honest inflexibility, would repel. None knew Austin better than his private secretary; none admired him more, nor understood as well the temper of his mind, the elements of his strength and weakness. The governor had not yet enjoyed enough of society to wear off the modesty which he

carried forth from the simplicity of his father's home. McGill, true to the instincts of the Irish race and with a flavor of Irish wit in his speech, loved and courted the social hour. It is not to be doubted, therefore, that he was a constant source of strength to his chief. 719 Moreover his eyes and ears gathered important facts which Governor Austin would not have seen or heard, but which a most confidential relationship enabled him to possess.

The governor and his secretary were thus associated during the four years of the former's incumbency of the governorship, with the exception of the closing fortnight. It was a period of mutual confidence and respect, when a friendship was formed far too deep to be disturbed by any subsequent event. We catch a glimpse of it when, in 1887, Governor McGill was able to appoint his friend to a place upon the board of railroad and warehouse commissioners, a position for which he was eminently qualified and which he filled with distinguished ability.

On the 15th of December, 1873, Governor Austin transferred his secretary to the office of insurance commissioner. The office had existed only about a year, and its duties were of comparatively slight importance, as there were then only about fifty insurance companies doing business in this state. The appointee continued at the head of that department for thirteen consecutive years, during which time he thoroughly familiarized himself with the insurance business, systematized the work of the office, secured the adoption of needful legislation, and placed on record a series of reports which gave him high standing in the insurance world as an officer of exceptional ability.

We now approach the most important epoch in the life of McGill, when his name became enrolled upon the roster of Minnesota's chief magistrates.

His nomination to the office of governor in 1886 was not a political accident, but the expression of the genuine sentiments of a large following of admiring citizens who had watched his official career and reposed confidence in his executive ability. It is not meant by this that his nomination was due to any remarkable demonstration in his behalf, for it

was not. Rather it is meant that by a quiet, able and conscientious discharge of duty, he had made for himself so favorable an impression upon the public mind that it told greatly in his favor in the pre-convention contest and brought him final success.

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Nor were the hopes of his friends disappointed in the events of the administration of his office. Whatever estimate posterity shall place upon the achievements of his administration, its verdict must be that no governor ever left behind him a purer official record. But his administration was far from being weak or fruitless. Short as was his tenure of the office of chief executive, several measures of great and permanent value were then enacted into law, two of which will long make his administration conspicuous, the one affecting the morals, the other the transportation interests of the state.

The Legislature of 1885, prompted by the wise and timely recommendations of Governor Hubbard in his message of that year, seriously took up the work of further regulation of the railways of the state, which culminated in the passage of the act of 1885, whereby the Railroad and Warehouse Commission was created, vested with certain important powers. That measure was a decidedly forward step, but, like all pioneer legislation, it was wanting in provisions without which it could only prove, at best, insufficient in practice and a disappointment to its friends. This truth was clearly recognized by many of the friends of the public regulation of common carriers.

Governor McGill was early in arriving at the view that it would not do to halt at the work done in 1885, good as it was, and he therefore made the subject an important feature of his first message to the Legislature. Happily for the welfare of the state, the Legislature was not remiss in seconding his efforts, and the question received immediate and thorough consideration upon many important phases. The result was a new measure adopted in 1887, more sweeping than the pre-existing law in the scope of its provisions, which, with the amendments of later years, make it the most comprehensive measure of its kind now extant. It is remarkable in this, that eighteen years ago it conferred upon the

Board of Railway Commissioners powers to prescribe maximum rates, the power which the President now recommends, against strenuous opposition, to be given to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

One has only to read Governor McGill's first message to the Legislature to learn with what wisdom and fairness he treated the subject of railroads. With no disposition to be unjust to the carrier, 721 he boldly advocated the rights of the shipper. Few measures have a place upon our statute books which have afforded greater relief to the industrial interests of the state than the railway act of 1887.

The other measure before referred to is the high license law, whose value in minimizing the evils of the liquor traffic is evidenced by the fact that no serious attempt has ever been made to repeal any of its essential provisions. The passage of such a law was one of the issues of the political contest of 1886, and it arrayed against the Republican candidate the embittered hostility of the liquor interests of the state. Be it said to his praise that he never once faltered in redeeming the pledge of his party to the people of the state.

Governor McGill was one of the founders of the Acker Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, in St. Paul. He threw the weight of his influence in favor of providing a home for the relief of honorably discharged soldiers. Now that his voice is hushed forever, let the following, taken from his first message to the Legislature, bear witness to his profound regard for those who wear the blue:

To you is accorded the privilege of giving substantial expression to the gratitude which the people of Minnesota feel toward the defenders of the Union, whose heroism and valor from 1861 to 1865 preserved us a nation. The death roll of the old soldiers tells us plainly that whatever is to be done in this direction must be done promptly. It must be done not as a charity, but as one of the many obligations resting upon us as citizens of a common country for which these men did valiant service in the dark days of the Rebellion.

The fruition of his labors in their behalf is the cluster of commodious structures reared on the picturesque site near Minnehaha Falls. It was during his administration that the state began its policy of maintaining farmers' institutes, a policy so wise that none would now dare to call it in question. These and many other subjects received his careful consideration and support.

When about to lay down the duties of his great office, his closing words to the Legislature, touching his administration, were:

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Whatever its defects, I shall at least carry with me into private life the solace which comes of an earnest endeavor to faithfully administer the trust placed in my hands by the people.

The defeat of Governor McGill as a candidate for renomination in 1888 was a great political mistake, a cause of sorrow to his friends, an injustice to himself, and the source of subsequent misfortune to his party. It was strangely at variance with the high praise bestowed upon him in the platform of his party adopted by the convention which passed him by. Note the words: “The Republican party points with pride to the pure and clean administration of Governor McGill and to the measures he commended.” His friends, and they are many, can never forget the wrong then done him nor cease to regret that he was not accorded a second term, when, relieved of many of those perplexities always incident to a first term, he could have devoted himself more exclusively to public affairs and thus have demonstrated all the more clearly how great were his talents and how unselfish his motives.

For several years immediately following his retirement from the gubernatorial office, he was engaged in private business. All in all, that was the cloudiest period of his life. He suffered in the financial storms which overwhelmed the country; but his sturdy spirit, though bowed, was not broken by it.

From June, 1900, until his death he occupied the office of postmaster of St. Paul. They were five years of happiness. He was peculiarly adapted to the position. The duties were congenial; his relations with his subordinates were most cordial; and his contact with the general public rarely failed to leave a pleasant memory behind.

He was state senator from Ramsey county during the sessions of the Thirty-first to the Thirty-fourth Legislatures inclusive. As a legislator, he was watchful and cautious, gave much thought to the welfare of our public institutions, was wise in council, and wielded a wholesome influence upon legislation. No man enjoyed to a higher degree the confidence of his fellow members.

The many and varied public positions held by Governor McGill speak louder than words of the esteem in which he was always held by his fellow citizens. There are men so weakened by pride that 723 public station only serves to give greater prominence to their vanity. Such the great bard had in mind when he made Hamlet, in the immortal soliloquy, speak of “the insolence of office.” With that tribe Governor McGill had no sympathy. He was always plain, simple, approachable, lovable, and glad to greet a friend or acquaintance anywhere. Nor was this the studied art of the timeserver, but the innate qualities of the true gentleman, implanted when he drew his life from the fountains of his noble mother's breast. He was popular because his manhood found quick response in the public heart, which cannot be long deceived.

Since the preparation of this address was begun, Governor Horace Austin, the old friend of Governor McGill during many years, has also been suddenly summoned hence. With the weight of seventy-four years upon him, it was his privilege at the funeral of Governor McGill to participate in the last rites of the living to the dead. He left the open grave with loneliness in his heart. Not long the separation. In life they had been “one soul in two bodies.” The spirit of the student beckoned to its old preceptor and he went. Theirs were two beautiful and most fitting deaths. Each had done his work manfully and according to the light with which he had been endowed. Each had discharged his obligations to the

world and faced the future with a sublime trust in the justice of his Maker. To each was it permitted to pass into the shadow with mental faculties unimpaired and bodily powers unwasted by lingering disease; like two warriors, were they fallen with harness on.

That freedom of discussion, which, kept within legitimate channels, is of utmost value in laying bare dishonesty, hypocrisy, and incompetency, but which too often degenerates into reckless and unblushing license to belie and defame, exerted itself cruelly and shamelessly against both of these patriotic and high-minded men. But the poisoned shafts beat harmless against flawless mail. Long after their detractors shall have been lost in oblivion, they will live in the esteem of the wise and good. Truth will do them justice. Their deeds will be read of men in the ever-changing 724 records of the great commonwealth which they served. The words of Omar Khayyam fit this hour:

“The moving finger writes, and having writ, Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a line, Nor all your tears wash out a breath of it.”

General James H. Baker said :

In Horace Austin, the sixth governor of the state of Minnesota, there is much to admire and respect. By profession a lawyer, he came to the bench of the Sixth Judicial District because of the general conviction that he was well fitted for the office. It was soon observed that he was an independent, upright, and fearless judge. This fact paved the way for greater preferment, and in 1869, backed by his entire judicial district, he was nominated for governor. The firmness and decisive character which he developed commended him more to the people than it did to the politicians. He advocated a complete revision of the criminal code; he opposed special legislation; he urged that the state and federal elections should occur on the same day; and when a subservient legislature apportioned the internal improvement lands among certain railroad corporations, he promptly vetoed the proposition, and secured the adoption of a constitutional amendment prohibiting the legislature from squandering these lands without consent of the voters.

These and like vigorous measures so commended him to the people that he was re-elected by a largely increased majority. There was about him so much independence of spirit, and such courage of his convictions, that he was not possessed of those qualities which fitted him for popularity or political prosperity. He had a certain sharpness and asperity of character. His nature was somewhat imperious, self-reliant and self-assertive, and he sometimes dealt harshly with those opposed to his views.

When the Sioux outbreak came and threatened the border with devastation, he attested his patriotic devotion by promptly offering his services to the state, and he made a splendid record in 725 defense of the homes of the frontier. At Camp Baker it was my fortune to see him lead a gallant charge against the infuriated savages.

When he retired from the gubernatorial office, he seemed to abandon the purpose or the hope of further political preferment, though he held several subordinate appointive offices, which he filled with dignity and honor. The uprightness of his character, his general intelligence and pertinent views on all public questions, made him a welcome guest among a large circle of friends. His private life was one of unsullied purity. His religious views were strict, but, in all, liberal. In some measure his life was incomplete, an admirable fragment, of which we could wish there had been more.

If you will study the roster of our governors with comparative care, you will find that Horace Austin stands well up in the front row, and he bequeaths to the state an honorable record as one of the best of its executives.

It is sorrowful indeed to see that our governors are passing away. Within one week, two unique personalities departed to the impenetrable beyond, Horace Austin and Andrew Ryan McGill. They were the Damon and Pythias of our executives, the Gemini of the gubernatorial constellation. All their lives they were the most intimate of friends. Each had his rise and development in the same city of St. Peter, a city famous for its governors. It

has furnished the state four executives, Swift, Austin, McGill, and Johnson. If Virginia was the mother of presidents, surely St. Peter is the prolific mother of governors.

Henry A. Swift, her first governor, was as clean, able and accomplished a man as ever honored the gubernatorial chair of our state. The two following we are now considering; and I may add that St. Peter's last offering, upon the chief magistrate's altar, gives abundant promise, by his fair, manly and graceful deportment, to add a fresh laurel to the brow of his native city.

There was something dramatic in the lives of these two governors. Their unexpected departure to the “pale realms of shade” recalls facts in their history, showing how they had traveled life's 726 dusty paths together, in sympathy and co-operation. In life, as in death, their intimacy was manifest.

When Austin became governor, he took McGill with him as private secretary. In due time Austin promoted McGill to be insurance commissioner, which position he held for thirteen years. In turn, when McGill became governor, he appointed Austin as railroad commissioner. In their orbit, as statesmen, neither of them affected to soar high. Neither of them was an orator, and thus they could not rely upon the magnetic power of speech to advance their interest. The plurality of each at the election was only about 2,000, being the lowest ever given to Republican candidates.

McGill's administration was characterized by faithful and meritorious work. He urged the simplification of the tax laws, the abolition of contract prison labor, and the establishment of that noble institution, the Soldiers' Home. He made a very firm and memorable stand in favor of high license and local option. These all stand to his honor and credit. He was one of the organizers of Acker Post, G. A. R., and ever remained one of its most efficient members. There is nothing to recall about McGill which is not pleasant and sweet to remember. Notwithstanding that he had been set aside in renomination by his party, he did not go over to the enemy; but resumed his wonted place in the ranks with dignity,

and performed every party duty uncomplainingly. He had done no wrong, and many subsequent rewards came to him by reason of his dignified and manly course.

That his party refused him a renomination was a political injustice. By every usage of the party, and by his excellent administration, he was entitled to it.

Governor McGill was justly esteemed as a citizen and a man. His affections bound him to his country and to his friends. Always kind and considerate of friend or foe, with a personal deportment beyond the reach of criticism, his constant civilities won upon all. Anger and resentment were unknown to him in his conduct of life. He was always, at all times and above all, a gentleman. He was truly the gentleman in politics. Above all, he possessed a spotless character; and character, like gold coin, passes 727 current among all men and in all countries. His private life was pure and sweet, and his friendship a benediction.

Death closes all questions, and hides all faults; but it is probable that these two friends had as little to cover and conceal as any two public men in the state. Their unexpected departure, the quick severance of all earthly ties, the sudden “loosing of the silver cord,” while cruel for friends to bear, I fully believe was in complete accord with the personal desire of each. In the language of the poet, we may say to them, as they might well say to each other:

“'T is hard to part, when friends are dear, Perhaps 't will cost a sigh, a tear,— Then steal away,—give little warning; Choose thine own time; say not ‘Good night,’ But in some brighter clime bid me ‘Good morning!’”

Governor Lucius F. Hubbard said:

Surely those of us who have listened to the memorial addresses of General Childs and General Baker, as indeed all who knew Governors Austin and McGill in life, will cordially subscribe to the sentiments of respect and eulogy which they have so well expressed.

I feel that I will be unable to add anything, except perhaps a brief reminiscence of a personal nature.

It was my good fortune to become somewhat intimate with Governor McGill in an official as well as in a personal relation, for the was a member of my official family during the time I occupied the executive office. His conduct of the office of State Insurance Commissioner during that time brought us much in contact, and gave me opportunity to accurately measure and appreciate the qualities of character that most distinguished him and dominated his relations in life. I had not known Governor McGill well prior to the time of which I speak, but I knew his reputation and qualifications as a public officer, and it was this knowledge, aside from all other considerations, that made me feel that the public interests would be best served by his continued occupation of the position. His long service in that office and the marked success of his administration of its affairs, as also his subsequent public service, 728 constitute a notable tribute to his ability and conscientious devotion to duty.

Officially and otherwise I always found Governor McGill to be a safe adviser. While deliberate in forming an opinion, he was logical and sound in his final judgment. It required time and much communication with him to learn and to appreciate at their value the sterling qualities that were an essential feature of his character. One quality that always impressed me was his loyalty to his friends and to his spoken word. Those who knew him well ever placed absolute confidence in any assurance he gave respecting the affairs of life or the more intimate relations between man and man.

Following our official relations, there continued until the day of his death a feeling upon my part that in Governor McGill I had a friend whose devotion would only be qualified by his sense of right and duty.

The death of Governor McGill creates the third vacancy in the official group who first occupied this building, in the early and middle '80s, in charge of the state administration.

Attorney General Hahn and Auditor Braden preceded him to the mystic beyond some years ago. The narrowing circumference of that circle is surely an admonition to those who survive and to all of us as well, that the span of life is but brief at best.

Though my acquaintance with Governor Austin was more limited, it was sufficient to enable me to accept as my own the judgment of his immediate friends and of the public at large in their high regard for his ability and integrity as a man and a public official. I was a member of the legislature during a part of the time he served as governor of the state, and among my reminiscences of that period is a vivid recollection of the kindly relations Governor Austin sought to maintain with his fellow workers in the public service.

Minnesota will honor the memory of these public servants as among those who have left their impress for good that will long endure upon the institutions of our state, and whose ability, integrity and patriotic effort characterized in an especial manner all their public acts.

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Governor John A. Johnson , who was prevented from being present at this meeting by official business in a distant part of the state, wrote the following tribute in a letter which was read by the secretary:

It will be impossible for me to accept your invitation to be present on this occasion. I sincerely regret my inability to be with you.

I had but a slight acquaintance with Governor Austin. He was one of the early pioneers of Minnesota and settled in St. Peter, my native city, several years before I was born. His activity there as a citizen and as a public official was very largely before my time and beyond my recollection. Because of his prominence, I have often heard him spoken of by the older citizens, and always in those complimentary terms which beget admiration for men. He was a man of the most rugged honesty, absolutely fearless in the conscientious discharge of his duty, and his name was always a synonymn for the very best things in human life. It was my pleasure to know him casually later in life. He was a man, I

imagine, somewhat after the style of our great martyred President, Abraham Lincoln. While apparently a man of serious moods, there was beneath all that a vein of the kindest humor, which made him one of the most attractive of men.

His service to the state, both as Judge and Governor, was most valuable. We have had more dramatic and more theatrical figures than Governor Austin, but I doubt that we have had in the governor's chair a more conscientious, learned and able executive.

It was my personal privilege to know Governor McGill very intimately. For ever twenty years we had been warm personal friends. I knew him as the editor of the St. Peter Tribune,and as a private citizen, and as a fellow member of the State Senate. I knew him in almost every capacity, and I think I can truthfully say that I have never known a kinder, truer, better friend than he was. As a member of the State Senate, it was permitted him always to be a commanding and leading figure. While not a strong man in debate, his counsel and his advice were always in demand. When he spoke, which was not frequent, he commanded 730 the respect and attention of the body as few other men could; this because of his honesty and sincerity of purpose. He was a friend of the common people and served the people faithfully and well. His record, both legislative and executive, is so well established that comment upon it is unnecessary, and yet I cannot refrain from saying that Minnesota has had no better public officer, either as Governor or as Senator, than Andrew R. McGill. I think of him most, however, as the individual citizen. His kindness, his thoughtfulness, his honesty, and,above all, his absolute devotion and loyalty to his friends, made him a man to be admired and revered. Exalted as he was by his fellow men and rising to eminent positions, he never forgot that he came from the people and that it was his duty to serve the people. His whole life, both as a private citizen and as a public officer, is an inspiration to the present and coming generations. Measured by every standard, except that of the selfish end of gaining money, his life was a rounded success.

The state can ill afford to lose such men. There must have been a Divine purpose in the taking away of these two close personal and political friends in such rapid succession. As

close to each other as Damon and Pythias, there is something sad and pathetic in their passing away within such a short interval.

Under all the circumstances surrounding their official career and mine, it seems as though I must be with you on this occasion, and I regret more than I can tell you that the press of official duties makes it impossible for me to follow my own desire.